

DECEMBER 19, 2003

**SCHAKOWSKY: *THE GRINCH*
*IS BACK AGAIN THIS YEAR***

CHICAGO, IL - U.S. Representative Jan Schakowsky (D-IL) today said, "*President Bush and Speaker Hastert can't seem to find room under the Christmas tree for the unemployed because they are too busy helping the country club set.*"

Schakowsky added that the Republicans are once again refusing to [extend the Temporary Extended Unemployment Compensation \(TEUC\)](#) program to millions of jobless workers. The program is set to expire three days before Christmas.

Schakowsky joined Margaret Blackshere, president of the Illinois AFL-CIO, and unemployed workers at a news conference to denounce the inaction by the Republican-controlled Congress that will result in:

- 90,000 unemployed workers per week nationwide losing their benefits starting December 22, 2003;
- 2.1 million unemployed workers being affected nationwide in the next six months;
- 19,000 unemployed workers in Illinois losing their benefits in January;
- 100,000 unemployed workers in Illinois losing their benefits by June 2004.

"The Grinch is back again this year. While President Bush and the Republicans are toasting each other for this supposed economic recovery, they are ignoring the 8.7 million unemployed workers and those who are about to lose their benefits. This is the first time in the history of the temporary assistance program that Congress refused to enact an extension when the current unemployment rate is higher than the rate at the time the program was enacted," Schakowsky said.

"Extending unemployment benefits will not only help unemployed Americans, but it is

also an effective way to bring back the economy and create jobs. For every \$1.00 spent on unemployment benefits, \$1.73 is returned in economic growth," Schakowsky concluded.

Below is the text of Schakowsky's full statement:

**STATEMENT OF U.S. REPRESENTATIVE JAN SCHAKOWSKY (D-IL)
NEWS CONFERENCE ON EXTENSION OF UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS
DECEMBER 19, 2003**

"Thank you, President Blackshere for your leadership and commitment to our working men and women and for your tireless fight on behalf of families all across Illinois.□□

"With the Holiday season upon us, it's deja vu all over again.□ Last year, Republicans hurried out of town and refused to extend unemployment benefits, leaving jobless workers with the prospect of losing their benefits just a few days before Christmas.□ Thanks to mounting public pressure from across the country, Republicans finally enacted an extension on January 8, 2003.□□

"The Grinch is back again this year.□ While President Bush and the Republicans are toasting each other for this supposed economic recovery, they are ignoring the 8.7 million unemployed workers and those who are about to lose their benefits.□ President Bush and Speaker Hastert can't seem to find room under the Christmas tree for the unemployed because they are just too busy helping the country club set.

"At a time when 8.7 million Americans are out of work, Republicans have turned back every attempt by Democrats in Congress to help families struggling to make ends meet in the Bush economy.□ This is the first time in the history of the temporary assistance program that Congress refused to enact an extension when the current unemployment rate is higher than the rate at the time the program was enacted.

"President Bush and Speaker Hastert refused to stand up for the millions of families who are struggling in the Bush economy.□ This is the season of giving, but the Republicans decided to take away the one thing those families have depended on to get them through this crisis in our economy: emergency compensation benefits.□□

"These families would rather be working and earning a paycheck.□ But where are the jobs?□ President Bush has the worst job creation record since the Great Depression and his Administration has gone 33 months without creating a single new net private sector job - the longest job slump since Herbert Hoover.□□ Almost nine million Americans are without work, and since President Bush took office, three million private sector jobs have been lost.□ According to Congress Daily, 75% of the nation's CEOs do not

anticipate any changes or a decrease in employment in 2004.

"Since the beginning of the Bush Administration, long-term unemployment has tripled to the highest level in almost 10 years. The percentage of Americans exhausting their regular unemployment benefits without finding a job has reached a record level. Many workers will run out of benefits long before they find a job. In fact, two million Americans have been out of work for more than six months.

"President Bush's economic plan is a failure. Millions of workers are still without jobs and the total picture is still bleak, falling far short of projected job growth. Today's national unemployment rate is 5.9%. In Illinois, we are at 6.7% unemployment rate. And to make matters worse, compared to a year ago, there are 50,000 fewer jobs in the state, including declines in manufacturing construction and government.

"President Bush promised 306,000 new jobs a month as a result of his latest round of tax cuts. He has not delivered on that promise. President Bush cannot even deliver 150,000 jobs a month, the level needed each month just to keep up with the workers entering the job market.

"It is unconscionable that with their dismal economic and job growth record, Republicans would skip town without helping the millions of unemployed workers that have lost their jobs under their watch. President Bush and the Republican Congress have delivered billions of dollars in tax cuts to millionaires, but they refuse to act so millions of working families can get a few hundred dollars a month.

"Extending unemployment benefits will not only help unemployed Americans, but it is also an effective way to bring back the economy and create jobs. For every \$1.00 spent on unemployment benefits, \$1.73 is returned in economic growth.

"It's time to replace President Bush's economic plan that has destroyed jobs. What we need is a new plan to create jobs and help the 8.7 millions American who are out of work. Democrats have that job-growth plan to give tax cuts to middle income Americans who drive the economy and tax relief to small businesses and manufacturers to hire unemployed workers, to provide relief to states and the unemployed, and to invest in highways and schools to create good paying jobs and strong communities."